Impacts of Transformational Leadership in Enhancing Secondary School Teachers' Motivation and Engagement in India

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify the impact of transformational leadership on teacher motivation and professional engagement in Indian secondary schools. In the context of an ever-changing education system, the current study focuses on three significant research questions: the correlation between transformational leadership behaviour and teacher motivation, to what extent such leadership influences teacher engagement, and teachers' issues impacting the implementation of transformational leadership practices. A quantitative survey was administered to 100 secondary school teachers with a standardized survey on the major transformational leadership aspects. The research suggests a really strong connection exists between transformational leadership styles like individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation and high levels of commitment and motivation in teachers. Some of the obstacles, however, including insufficient preparation to act as leaders, opposition to changing culture, and holding back of resources, were discovered to impede the application of the transformational style of leadership in schools. The argument calls for systemic professional development, cultural transformation, and institutional support in creating a more empowered teaching culture. This study adds to Indian educational leadership research and provides pragmatic policy recommendations to the concerned institutions and policymakers for attaining sustainable teacher development through transformational efforts.

Keywords: Secondary Schools, Teacher Engagement, Teacher Motivation, Transformational Leadership

Introduction

Transformational leadership, a term used extensively across both business and educational

contexts, is of absolutely critical concern when considering how much teachers like their work. Eliophotou-Menon and Ioannou (2016), postulated that great leaders are visionary thinkers who make changes happen. They do not just follow what is currently in place or how things are done. Instead, they often push beyond the old ways to better new systems and get bigger results. They create a teamwork atmosphere, focusing on the shared purpose and goals of the company while caring about what each person needs (Kouni, Koutsoukos and Panta, 2018). This method is quite important in schools and other learning places, where leaders must work hard to make good environments filled with trust that help teachers grow professionally and students succeed (Berkovich and Eyal, 2017). In terms of Indian high school education, transformative leadership is even more important. It carries extra meaning. When India changed its school rules and started focusing more on how good teachers were doing versus student results, the part that school leaders played became crucial (Kareem *et al.*, 2023). Leaders who bring change in these places must work with the old Chinese school values and new ideas about progress for world success. India has reformed its education policies to not only assess student academic performance but also to assess teachers' ability to develop professionally and assess the effectiveness of their teaching practice. Education was previously assessed through the performance of students on exam results, often ignoring how conditions and motivation influenced teachers. It is also important to foster an attitude of constant learning and adapting among teachers so they can keep getting better over time. By encouraging teachers to perform better than the initial set of goals and continue learning, leaders can significantly alter the extent to which they desire to try new approaches to teaching (Fang and Yu, 2023). This influences the entire school environment such that learning and innovation are made simpler. Thus, considering how transformational leaders influence teacher motivation and engagement in Indian secondary schools provides an understanding of effective school management practices. This influences the whole school environment in ways favourable to open learning and innovation. In the context of India, where schools regularly contend with broader systemic challenges, including exorbitantly high levels of teacher-student ratios, bureaucratic hierarchies and approaches, and minimal resources, it is particularly relevant to investigate transformational leadership. Understanding how such leadership practices exist in and impact teacher motivation and engagement in Indian secondary schools can provide some tangible ideas towards addressing those challenges. It also sheds light on ways leadership can be harnessed in different educational and cultural contexts, revealing ways of improving and designing more effective and sustainable school management practices and processes to optimise the use of education in countries such as India. This study can serve to understand good approaches to leading teachers and highlights that these can call for specific adjustments for the various needs of teaching-learning institutions in India.

Review of Literature
Transformational Leadership: Concept and Dimensions

Transformational leadership, founded by Burns (1978) and developed further by Bass and Avolio (2006), is a way of leading in which leaders inspire the followers to achieve above what is expected by changing their attitudes, beliefs and values (Burns, 2012). Transformational leadership consists of four components: "idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration" (Bass and Avolio, 2006). Idealised influence

leaders are respected and considered trustworthy by others. "Inspirational motivation" is focused on expressing a vision appeal, whereas intellectual stimulation focuses on problem-solving and creativity. Individualized consideration is focused on mentoring and attending to needs one-to-one (Tang et al., 2024). In schools, these behaviours result in an effective climate where teachers are empowered and appreciated.

Transformational Leadership in Schools

Empirical studies demonstrate that leaders with the transformational style have strong effects on improving school efficiency by promoting cooperation, innovation, and shared purpose (Li, 2022). Transformational leaders will be capable of positively influencing teacher performance through the use of open communication, trust, and ongoing learning (Sianipar, 2024). Berkovich and Eyal (2017) believe that transformational leadership is highly applicable in schools where motivation and morale directly affect the learning outcomes of the students. Schools under the leadership of transformational leaders will also tend to have more effective professional communities, which are translated into higher teacher satisfaction and turnover (Nguni *et al.,* 2006).

Teacher Motivation and Leadership

Teacher motivation is the greatest predictor of instructional quality and pupil achievement. It can be affected by intrinsic forces such as professional development, autonomy, job satisfaction and extrinsic forces such as pay, workload, and leadership assistance (Tria, 2023). Transformational leadership has also been recognised as one of the main drivers for promoting intrinsic motivation by providing chances for specialized growth, appreciating teachers' work, and promoting a sense of belongingness. According to Zhang *et al.* (2025), when teachers are engaged in decision-making and their efforts are appreciated by school leaders, teachers become more content with their occupation and are more involved at work. Heenan et al. (2023) further contributed by pointing out that transformational leaders shape teachers' competence and autonomy beliefs, two of the strongest elements of motivation under Self-Determination Theory.

Teacher Engagement and Leadership Influence

Teacher engagement refers to emotional, cognitive, and physical involvement in work among teachers (Shu, 2022). Teachers with higher chances of being engaged will be found to show enthusiasm, originality, and determination in their teaching practice. Leadership plays a central role in shaping such engagement through positive, embracing, and vision-driven practices. Zhang (2021) portrayed how, under the influence of effective school leadership, instructors have greater levels of engagement, emotional resilience, and instructional proficiency. Transformational leaders create a shared culture, enabling professional cooperation and innovation and directly influence instructors' levels of engagement (Riddel and Zulfikar, 2024). Yu (2023) contends that transformational leadership, by encouraging intellectual development and tailored encouragement, keeps teachers emotionally engaged and motivated in the adoption of new pedagogies and professional challenges.

The Indian Context

Under the Indian secondary school system, in which high student-teacher ratios,

bureaucratic tasks, and dated pedagogies are the norm for teachers, quality leadership is a particularly sharp need (Moore, 2024). Recent reforms such as the "National Education Policy (NEP)" 2020 place teacher empowerment, ongoing professional development, and leadership at the school level at the centre of enhancing teaching quality (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). Only limited research has looked at how transformational leadership influences Indian teachers. Most Indian school leadership studies concentrate on administrative effectiveness or instructional leadership instead of transformational leadership. Some of the recent works report that Indian school principals who exhibit transformational behaviours of mentoring, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation have more engaged and committed teaching staff (Wilson, Heenan *et al.,* 2023). Furthermore, hierarchical school organisation, cultural values, and limited autonomy of teachers in the vast majority of Indian schools pose special contextual issues for the realisation of transformational leadership.

Research Gaps

While studies around the world show transformational leadership boosts teacher motivation and happiness in their jobs, the picture is not so clear for India, especially at secondary schools. Even fewer studies have looked at teacher perceptions themselves through survey-based approaches, which could be rich with observations on day-to-day leadership effects.

This research will bridge such gaps by analysing Indian secondary school teachers' attitudes towards the influence of transformational leadership on their involvement along with motivation, and by identifying the greatest challenges they face under such circumstances.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study how Indian secondary school teachers see the link between transformational leadership behaviours and their motivation.
2. To determine how teachers feel about how transformational leadership affects their motivation at work.
3. To find out the most significant problems teachers deal with that affect their use of transformational leadership techniques in Indian secondary schools.

Research Questions

1. How does the use of transformational leadership affect the motivation of teachers in Indian secondary schools?
2. How much does transformational leadership increase the involvement of teachers at the secondary level in India?
3. What specific challenges related to transformational leadership practices do secondary school teachers in India identify as affecting their motivation and professional engagement?

Methodology of the Study
Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive, non-experimental quantitative survey design. Although there is a larger goal of developing more insight, the employment of structured survey instruments permits for the collecting data through a larger sample. It facilitates easier discovery of patterns and interactions among leadership behaviours and teacher motivation and participation (Kinyua,

2023). Descriptive design enables the researcher to observe and describe the traits of a phenomenon without manipulating variables. It applies to understanding the perceptions of teachers toward their leaders' transformational behaviour and how such behaviour influences their motivation and engagement levels.

Research Approach

A survey approach was chosen as the core research instrument. Surveys are ideal for gathering bulk data within a reasonably short time frame, particularly whenanalysing perception, attitude, and self-reported behaviour (Caminiti*et al.,* 2025). It is also appropriate for the majority of studies on educational leadership that have tried to look into the impact of leadership styles from the educator's perspective. Although the questionnaire is mainly made up of "closed-ended Likert-type questions", some "open-ended questions" might be added to allow the elicitation of contextual issues or leadership development concepts.

Population and Sampling

The populations under study are Indian secondary school teachers in private and public schools. Secondary school is prioritized because there is a greater expectation of teachers at this level to achieve curriculum outcomes, manage adolescent learners, and achieve performance targets. A non-probability purposive sampling technique has beenutilized for the participants' recruitment. It ensures that participants with appropriate experience (having at least a year's experience in working within a school environment and schooling leadership know-how are sampled (Ahmed, 2024). The research was conducted around 100 teachers representing various Indian states to yield a variety of views. Additionally, teachers were selected from different types of schools, such as government, private and government-sponsored, so that detailed feedback can be drawn from all perspectives (Refer to figure 1). Members were approached through professional networks, school administrators, and teaching organizations. Informed consent was achieved before taking part, and all comments were made anonymous in the interest of confidentiality and openness.
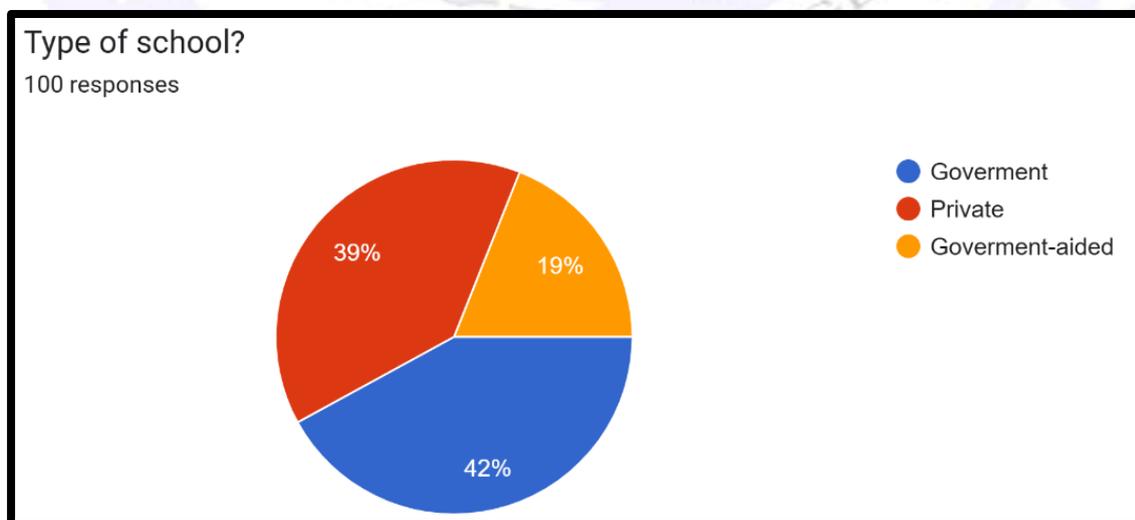

Figure 1: Types of schools chosen for the sample collection

Research Instrument

The questionnaire was the main data collection tool. It consisted of four parts:

1. *Demographic Details* – Includes age, gender, school category (public/private), number of years of teaching experience, and geographical location.
2. *Transformational Leadership Behaviour*– These are derived from Bass and Avolio's (2006) "Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)". The perceived existence of four building block dimensions is measured via these: providing each person with support, encouragement, new ideas and attention to their needs.
3. *Teacher Motivation* – Items are drawn from sound teacher motivation scales for Self-Determination Theory (Deci et al., 2017) that assess "autonomy, competence, and relatedness".
4. *Teacher Engagement* – Items assess emotional, cognitive, and behavioural engagement and are drawn from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Decuypere and Schaufeli, 2021).

They were measured on a "5-point Likert scale" from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). The tool was pre-tested for readability and face validity by educational leadership academic specialists before its distribution.

Data Collection Procedure

Collecting data for the project took four weeks. Since paper copies would take more time, "Google Forms" were used to send the questionnaire out electronically and by email to help it reach a larger number of people, mainly in rural areas (Chitungo et al., 2021). The teachers were clearly instructed to fill out the survey, and reminders were also sent for a better response rate.

All decisions were voluntary, confidentiality was respected and people could end the session at any time. The subjects were told that the study was for academic purposes, and no identifiers were going to be taken.

Data Analysis Techniques

Statistical analysis on quantitative information derived through "closed-ended questions", with some statistical packages like Excel, has been used. Descriptive statistics which include "mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage", were utilised to describe teacher responses (Maqbool and Jowett, 2023). Inferential statistics, for example, Pearson correlation analysis, to examine how much transformational leadership behaviors relate to teacher motivation and engagement, has been used. Regression analysis would also be utilised to establish to what degree transformational leadership behaviours influence the levels of motivation and engagement (Chua and Ayoko, 2021). Open-ended qualitative responses (if present) were coded and thematically analyzed to determine recurring topics or propositions within the domain of leadership practices.

Ethical Considerations

This research complies with ethics in researching human subjects. There was ethical clearance from the controlling body. There was the issuing of an informed consent form, and the subjects voluntarily participated (Sivasubramaniam et al., 2021). There was no collection of identifiable data, hence the guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality of data.

Result and Discussion

Theme 1: Influence of Transformational Leadership on Teacher Motivation

The research reveals a positive correlation between transformational leadership behaviors and teacher motivation. 92% of the teachers indicated that they felt "emotionally connected with the mission and vision" of schools (Refer to figure 2). This showcases that feeling energized and enthusiastic about work indicates that transformational leaders can evoke a shared vision, which is one of the most essential aspects of transformational leadership theory (Sharma and Adeoye, 2024). 90% of the teachers indicated that they felt "energized and enthusiastic" about their job (Refer to figure 3). These types of responses imply that transformational leaders can trigger intrinsic motivation within their employees by giving them a sense of purpose and passion in the workplace. In this case, motivation is not just extrinsically motivated by reward or incentive but deeply established from a sense of belonging and belief in the vision of the school. These results follow the research that shows transformational leaders inspire through idealized influence and inspirational motivation (Tan et al., 2021). Whenever leaders show commitment, passion, and vision, they evoke the same degree of enthusiasm and motivation among followers. Hence, the research question is given strong support by the results: the motivation of teachers in Indian secondary schools is linked with transformational leadership. From this, it can be inferred that training school leaders on transformational leadership could increase teacher morale and satisfaction.
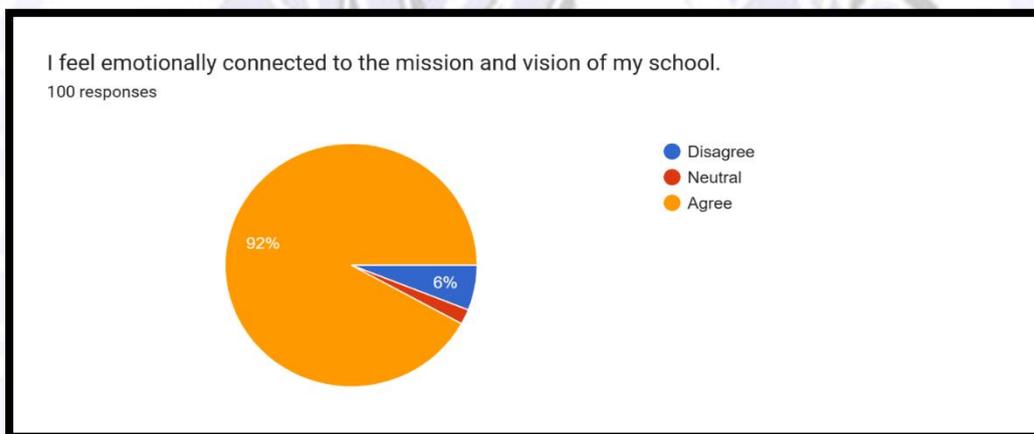
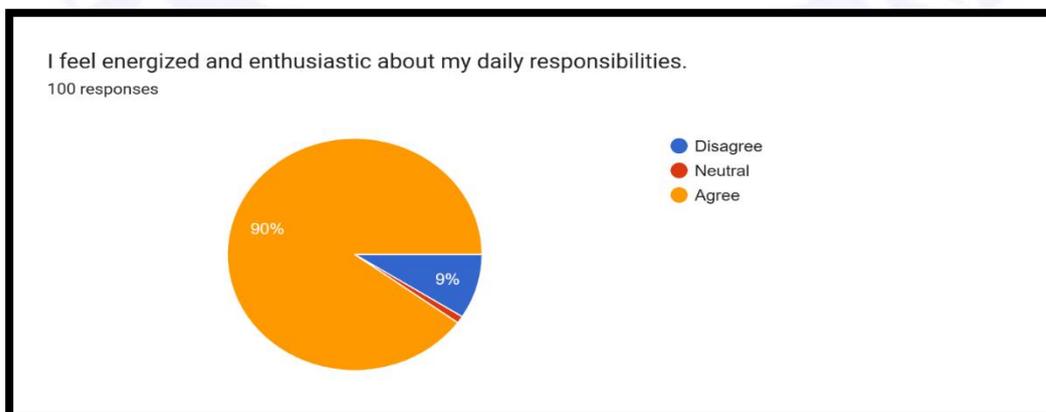

Figure 2: Understanding emotional connection with school

Figure 3: No. of teachers feel energized and enthusiastic to go to school daily

Theme 2: Role of Transformational Leadership in Enhancing Teacher Engagement

The data from the survey suggests that teacher participation is greatly enhanced by transformational leadership. The large percentage of respondents, nearly 87%, reported that their leaders "encourage them to be involved in decision-making," a defining characteristic of participative and individualized consideration leadership (Refer to figure 4). If teachers perceive that they are being listened to and included in crafting school policy or classroom routines, they become more engaged in their work. In addition, teachers concurred that they participate actively in school activities outside of the teaching load, being evidenced by 87% of the respondents, which implies their willingness to contribute to extracurricular activities, community outreach programs, and institutional growth (Refer to figure 5). Such active involvement is a demonstration of high levels of professional commitment, which can be directly attributed to leaders promoting intellectual stimulation and establishing an environment of cooperation. This is in line with the work of Kareem et al. (2023), who concluded that transformational leadership inspires increased engagement through empowering and innovating. When leaders appreciate and honour their teachers' labour outside of formal instructional classroom time, it creates an overall culture of engagement that transcends the details of the contract. Thus, evidence proves that transformational leadership has a positive effect on teacher engagement, supporting the second research question. Indian school leaders who follow transformational leadership styles would be more likely to create a committed and motivated teaching force, which in turn might lead to improved students' performance and school efficiency.
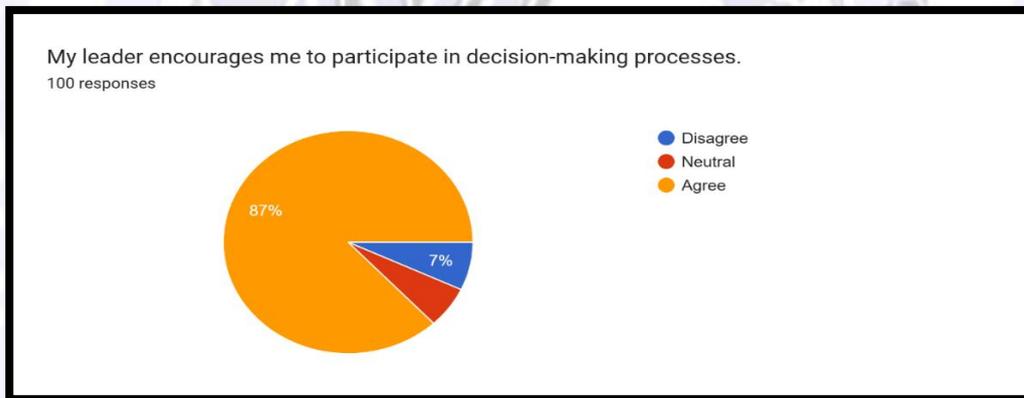

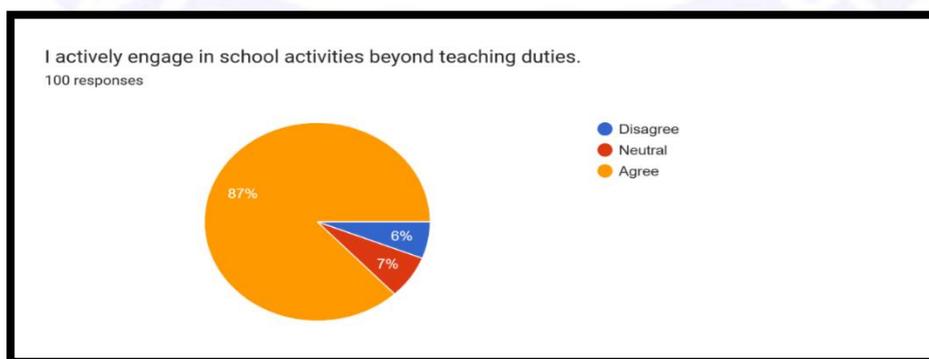**Figure 4:** Amount of encouragement provided by leaders

Figure 5: Level of engagement of the school teachers beyond their work duties

Theme 3: Challenges in Practicing Transformational Leadership in Indian Schools

While the advantages are clear, there are many difficulties in using transformational leadership in Indian schools. About 80% of teachers stated that leadership training and development are lacking in schools, because those in charge are often not chosen for their skills which has created a separation between wanting to lead and actually doing so (Refer to figure 6). Without transformational practice training, school leaders might not be able to adopt vision-driven or emotional intelligence-driven strategies for teacher development (Zainal and MohdMatore, 2021). Resistance to change is a serious problem that still exists, being evidenced by the 86% of the respondents agreeing to the fact that there is resistance to change among teachers and staff in more government-aided or traditional schools (Refer to figure 7). This cultural momentum creates a tough situation even for strong leaders to bring new practices into being (Masry-Herzallah and Stavissky, 2021). Change, one of the fundamental assumptions of transformational leadership, was received with suspicion or passive resistance in schools with established structures and hard-hitting hierarchies. The second issue often articulated is the issue of administrative workload, which leaves leaders with less time to devote to meaningful leadership practice. 79% of the respondents highlight the issue being a major problem for leadership growth (Refer to figure 8). Rather than being engaged in teacher development or vision building, principals are often consumed by bureaucratic work and compliance. This bureaucratic load dilutes their function as mentors or thought leaders, thereby impacting the classroom environment for teachers.

Lastly, another major problem of "limited resources" is accepted as many schools, especially rural or poor communities, do not have the resources, technology, or money support needed to be in a position to sustain revolutionary projects.83% of the teachers have highlighted the fact of lacking resources in the educational sector (Refer to figure 9). In this situation, even sound leadership can be restricted in its function, as it cannot enact the tools or programs necessary to realize its vision (Meng, 2022). Thus, these challenges point to structural and systemic problems that need to be solved for transformational leadership to be practiced in Indian secondary schools.
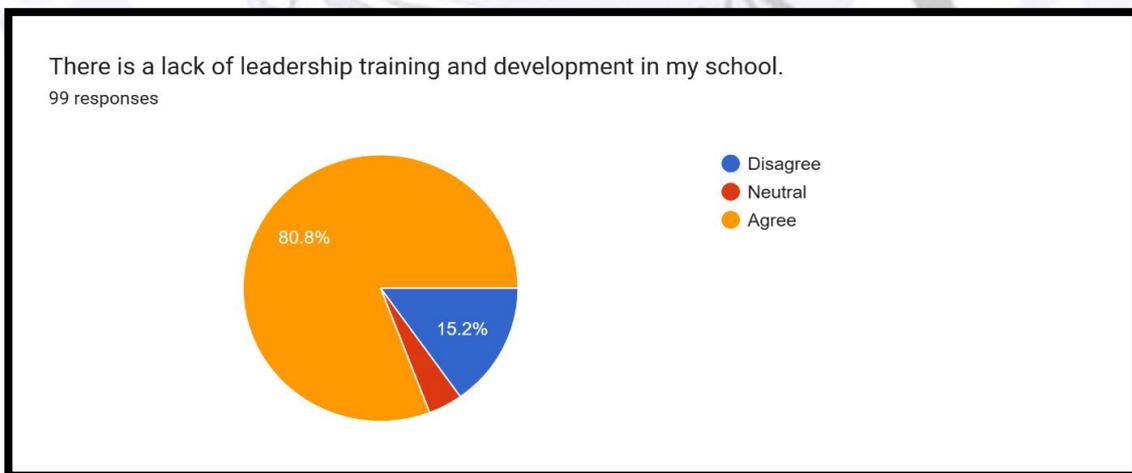

There is a lack of leadership training and development in my school.
99 responses

- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree

80.8%
15.2%

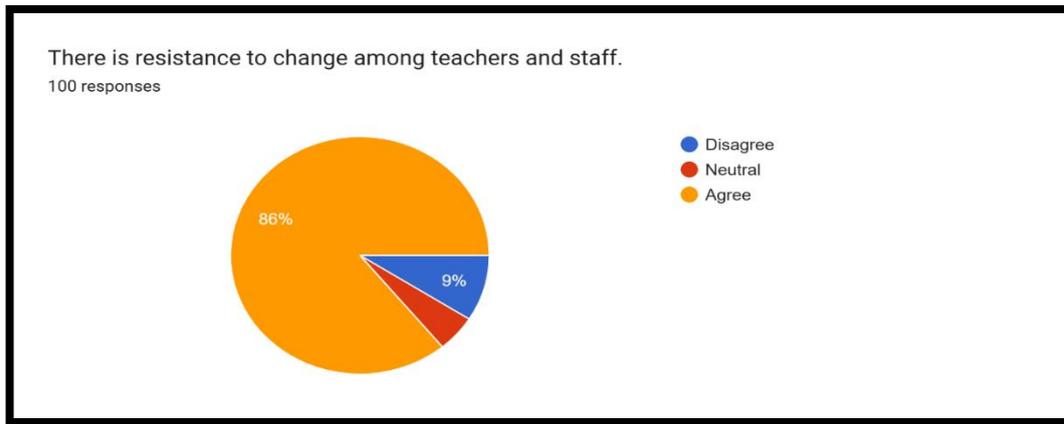**Figure 6:** The amount of lack in teachers' training and development in schools

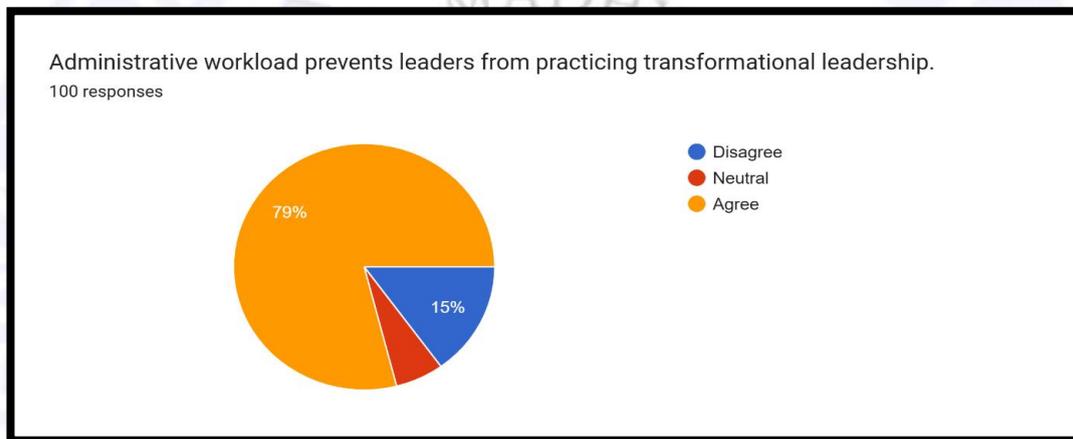**Figure 7:** Amount of resistance among teachers and staff to change

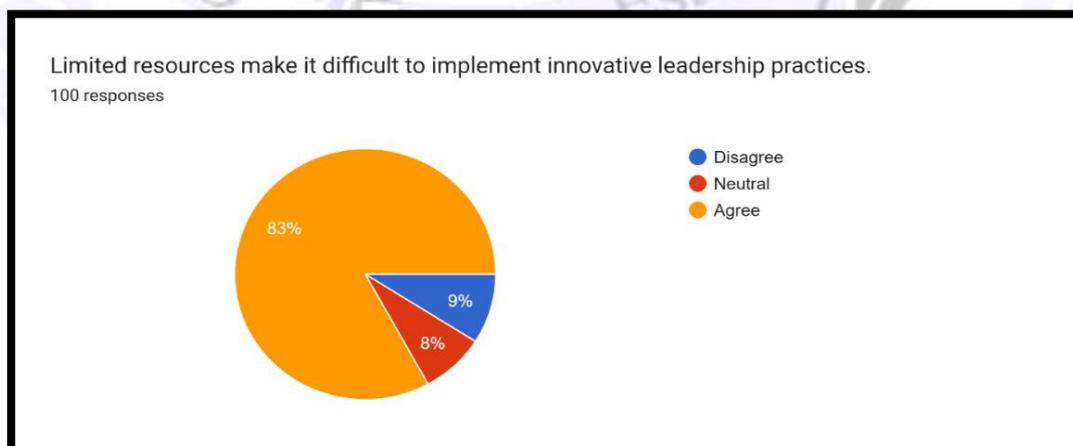**Figure 8:** Amount of administrative workload affecting transformational leadership

Figure 9: Amount of difficulties faced in becoming innovative leadership with limited resources

Conclusion and Recommendation

This investigation sought to analyse the correlation between transformational leadership behaviours and teacher motivation, participation, and reasons why such leadership behaviour is stifled in Indian secondary schools. The evidence is clear because teachers who were led well-

tended to be motivated and participate more. Whenever school leaders exhibited traits such as vision, inspiration, and individual attention, teachers reciprocated with enhanced professional responsibility and commitment. Teachers involved in decision-making, innovating, and valuing individual contributions were more effective at creating an energised and motivated workforce. However, research also suggested entrenched challenges that inhibit the full manifestation of transformational leadership in school life. They are the lack of leadership training, over-administration, deep-seated cultural habits resistant to change, and resource constraints in facilities and morale. It is clear from the evidence that it takes a system and multi-faceted approach to promote transformational leadership in Indian secondary schools.

First, there is an imperative need to institute formal development programs focusing specifically on the education sector. These programs must emphasise administrative ability as well as the softer abilities of emotional intelligence, communication, and vision-creation at the core of transformational leadership. Secondly, schools must develop a culture of peer mentorship and support among the leaders. This can be done by inviting older and experienced leaders to mentor and teach the newer ones, which will guarantee a more sustainable leadership pipeline and a sense of collective responsibility and development (Eliophotou-Menon and Ioannou, 2016). In addition, to grant school leaders room to use employees more effectively, there is a need to lighten their administrative load by delegating some of their responsibilities to support staff or simplifying the routine tasks through the use of technology (Peek, 2024). Another fundamental recommendation is crafting a school-wide cultural change appreciating openness to change and collaborative leadership. Inclusive and participatory practices are emulated by leaders, and teachers are more likely to become responsive if they observe leaders demonstrating these. Such transformation can be developed over time through ongoing staff development initiatives, open forums, and trust-building exercises. Resource allocation is also significant in facilitating transformational leadership (Decuypere and Schaufeli, 2021). Schools without minimum infrastructure or professional development equipment produce a culture of frustration instead of inspiration. Investment in the two, either from public or private-public investment, has the potential to greatly increase the efficacy of school leaders (Morandini et al., 2023). Schools must have a continuous feedback and assessment system wherein teachers can share their thoughts regarding school climate and leadership strategies. In doing so, the leadership remains sensitive and flexible to the changing needs of students as well as employees. Overall, transformational leadership holds the ability to significantly influence India's educational performance, but only with the support of well-balanced training, institutional change, cultural transformation, and allocation of resources and only then can school leaders become authentic agents of constructive and sustainable change.

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